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REMARKS

The application has been reviewed in light of the final Office Action dated March 22, 2005. Claims 1-46 are pending, with claims 1, 5, 9, 12, 15, 20, 23, 28, 31, 35 and 39 being in independent form. By this Amendment, independent claims 1, 5, 9, 12, 15, 20, 23, 28, 31 and 35 have been amended to recite more clearly a feature which is already explicitly recited in independent claim 39. Accordingly, Applicant submits that no new matter and no new issues are introduced by this Amendment, and requests entry of this Amendment.

Claims 1-46 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as purportedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,665,425 to Sampath et al.

Applicant has carefully considered the Examiner's comments and the cited art, and respectfully submits that independent claims 1, 5, 9, 12, 15, 20, 23, 28, 31 and 35, as amended, and independent claim 39 in its original form are patentable over the cited art, for at least the following reasons.

This application relates to monitoring status of consumable products (such as toner, ink, etc.) and maintenance components in communications terminal apparatuses and image forming apparatuses. Conventionally, this monitoring is performed by a user, and when the communications terminal apparatus is not performing properly, the user places a call to a maintenance center requesting repair of the component or replenishment of the consumable product.

Applicant devised tools for automating such tasks in a communications terminal apparatus, including (a) automatically detecting a status of usage of a consumable product used in the apparatus and supplied by a service depot, and sending (i) a request for supplying the consumable product to a manager using an electronic communications address of the

manager when the near end of the consumable product is automatically detected and (ii) a

report for reporting a completion of supplying the consumable product on the apparatus when

refill of the consumable product is detected (for example, as described in claims 1, 9, 15, 23,

31 and 39), and (b) automatically detecting an event indicative of a defect in a maintenance

component used in the apparatus, and sending i) a request for repair service to the manager

and the service depot using the respectively registered electronic communications addresses

of the manager and the service depot, when the defect event is automatically detected, and ii)

a report for reporting a completion of the repair service on the apparatus when the defect of

the maintenance component is no longer detected (for example, as described in claims 5, 12,

20, 28, 35 and 39).

Sampath does not involve automatic detection of (1) a near end of a consumable

product or (2) a defect event involving a maintenance component.

Sampath, as understood by Applicant, is directed to automated diagnosis and remediation

of image quality in a document processing system, through a diagnostic inference engine which is

invoked by the user when the user is not satisfied with the system's performance. The diagnostic

inference engine does not automatically monitor and detect consumable usage status and

component defect. The diagnostic inference engine of Sampath must be triggered by the user.

Applicant simply does not find teaching or suggestion in Sampath, however, of the

automated detection features of the claimed invention, such as (A) automatically detecting a

status of usage of a consumable product used in the apparatus and supplied by a service depot,

and sending (1) a request for supplying the consumable product to a manager using an electronic

communications address of the manager when the near end of the consumable product is

automatically detected and (2) a report for reporting a completion of supplying the consumable

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product on the apparatus when refill of the consumable product is detected, as provided by the

claimed invention of claims 1, 9, 15, 23, 31 and 39, and (B) automatically detecting an event

indicative of a defect in a maintenance component used in the apparatus, and sending (i) a request

for repair service to the manager and the service depot using the respectively registered electronic

communications addresses of the manager and the service depot, when the defect event is

automatically detected, and (ii) a report for reporting a completion of the repair service on the

apparatus when the defect of the maintenance component is no longer detected (for example, as

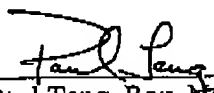provided by the claimed invention of claims 5, 12, 20, 28, 35 and 39.

Accordingly, for at least the above-stated reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that

independent claims 1, 5, 9, 12, 15, 20, 23, 28, 31, 35 and 39, and the claims depending therefrom,

are patentable over the cited art.

If a petition for an extension of time is required to make this response timely, this paper

should be considered to be such a petition. The Office is hereby authorized to charge any fees

that may be required in connection with this amendment and to credit any overpayment to our

Deposit Account No. 03-3125.

If a telephone interview could advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is

respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney.

Allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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